

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 NEA-07 INR-05

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6794

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 16455

LIMDIS

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, EG, LY, SY, US

SUBJECT: MFA OFFICIAL DISCUSSES RECENT MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS

REF: MOSCOW 15412 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: DURING ACALL NOVEMBER 14 BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR,
PYRLIN, DEPUTY CHIEF, MFA NEAR EAST COUNTRIES DIVISION, STATED THAT
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PROPOSAL FOR A RECONVENED GENEVA CONFERENCE WAS DESIGNED TO SET FORTH THE SOVIET POSITION CLEARLY AND PUBLICLY, BUT TIMING OF ITS ISSUANCE WAS NOT CONNECTED TO ANY SPECIFIC REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OR TO UN VOTES ON PALESTINAINS. STATEMENT, PYRLIN SAID, WAS CONNECTED WITH "SEVERAL" REMARKS MADE BY PRESIDENT SADAT WHILE HE WAS IN U.S. IMPLICATION WHICH COULD BE DRAWN FROM PYRLIN'S REMARKS WAS THAT PURPOSE OF STATEMENT WAS TO REFUTE SADAT AND PERHAPS PUT PRESSURE ON EGYPTIANS TO MOVE THEM CLOSER TO SOVIET POSITION ON GENEVA. PYRLIN ADDED THAT THERE WAS NOT INTENDED TO BE ANY SENSE OF URGENCY CONVEYED BY THE DEMARCHE.

2. THE WORKING OUT OF THE "DETAILS" OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN VENEGA IS AWAITING THE VISIT TO MOSCOW BY ARAFAT, BUT PYRLIN CLAIMED NO DATE FOR THIS TRIP HAS YET BEEN SET. HE SAID THAT THE CONTINUING CRISIS IN LEBANON PROBABLY MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ARAFAT TO COME TO MOSCOW AT THIS TIME. PYRLIN ASSERTED THAT THE RECENT STATEMENT DID NOT CHANGE SOVIET POSITION ON PARTIAL STEPS, AND THAT THE SOVIET UNION STILL ADHERED TO THE VIEW THAT PARTIAL MEASURES REACHED WITHIN THE GENEVA FRAMEWORK WERE ACCEPTABLE. HOWEVER, HE ADDED, THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WANT A SECOND GOLAN DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT NOW. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT DAMASCUS' EXTENSION OF THE UNDOF MANDATE WILL PROBABLY OCCUR "ONLY AT THE LAST MINUTE," AND PERHAPS EVEN LATER. PYRLIN CLAIMED THAT A SOVIET ECONOMIC DELEGATION IS READY TO GO TO EGYPT TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC MATTERS, BUT DELAYS CAUSED BY BUDGET PROBLEMS" WITHIN THE CAIRO GOVERNMENT ARE PREVENTING THE START OF DISCUSSIONS. PYRLIN ADDED THAT MOSCOW "IS WILLING TO DISCUSS" THE QUESTION OF DEBT-RESCHEDULING FOR EGYPT. PYRLIN STATED THAT THE RECENT VISIT OF AN IRAQI DELEGATION HEADED BY THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION CONTRIBUTED TO THE "STEADILY IMPROVING" BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH BAGHDAD. ACCORDING TO PYRLIN, THERE ARE NO MAJOR ARAB-SOVIET VISITS SCHEDULED FOR THE WINTER MONTHS.

END SUMMARY

3. GENEVA CONFERENCE DEMARCHE AND THE PALESTINIANS. PYRLIN INSISTED THERE WAS NO PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE IN THE TIMING OF THE NOVEMBER 9 STATEMENT DELIVERED BY DOBRYNIN AND THT IT WAS NOT TIED TO THE PASSAGE OF THE TWO UNGA RESOLUTIONS ON PALESTINIANS OR TO ANY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS. ACCORDING TO HIM, THE USSR
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BELIEVED IT HAD BECOME NECESSARY TO STATE THE SOVIET POSITION CLEARLY CONCERNING THE MIDDLE EAST, " BECAUSE THERE WERE DIFFERING IDEAS AND POSITIONS BEING DISCUSSED." AND BECAUSE IT WAS FELT THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO AMBIGUITY REGARDING SOVIET VIEWS ON THIS IMPORTANT MATTER. IN THIS REGARD, HE ADDED THATT THE DEMARCHE WAS PERHAPS CONNECTED TO "SEVERAL COMMENTS" (PRESUMABLY ABOUT THE USSR) WHICH PRESIDENT SADAD HAD MADE WHILE IN THE UNITED STATES. PYRLIN ALSO CITED SADAT'S EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THE GENEVA FORUM

AND THE EGYPTIAN CALL FOR PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE MEPC NEGOTIATIONS. WHEN ASKED WHY SOVIETS HAVE RECENTLY NOT BEEN REFERRING TO UN RESOLUTION 242, PYRLIN INSISTED THAT A GENUINE SETTLEMENT RESTED ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSC RESOLUTION 338, "WHICH IS A BETTER AND BROADER RESOLUTION THAN 242." HE POINTED OUT THAT, IN ANY CASE, 338 CALLS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF 242. PYRLIN SAID THAT MOSCOW'S POSITION HAD NOT CHANGED REGARDI PROVISIONS FOR A SETTLEMENT WHICH MUST BE BASED ON: (A) COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORY: (B) PROVISION FOR THE EXPRESSION OF THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHT TO FORM THUD

FN SRTE; AND (C) GUARANTIES FOR THE SECURITY OF ALL STATES OF THE REGION. INCLUDING ISRAEL. WHEN IT WAS POINTED OUT TO PYRLIN THAT SOME SOVIET LEADERSHIP STATEMENTS, SUCH AS PELSHE'S NOVEMBER 7 KREMLIN SPEECH, HAVE LATELY NOT INCLUDED THIS THIRD STIPULATION, PYRLIN SHRUGGED THIS OFF AND REPEATED THAT THE POSITION OF THE SOVIET UNION REMAINS THE SAME ON THIE QUESTION. PRYLIN ALSO CONFIRMED THAT THE NOVEMBER 9 DEMARCHE EXPRESSED SOVIET POSITION THAT PLO SHOULD BE REPRESENTED AS SEPARATE ENTITY AT GENEVA FROM THE VERY BEGINNING O F NEGOTIATIONS. HE DENIED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS WAS ANY CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS SOVIET POSITION, AND POINTED OUT THAT GROMYKO MADE THIS CLEAR TO SECRETARY DURING THEIR CONVERSATIONS IN SEPTEMBER.

4. PYRLIN ASSERTED THAT THE DETAILS OF PALESTINIAN PARTICI- PATION IN THE NEGOTIATIONG PROCESS ARE TO BE WORKED OUT DURING ARAFAT'S UPCOMING VISIT TO MOSCOW. PYRLIN ADDED THAT MOSCOW'S INVITATION TO THE PLO CHEIF HAD BEEN ACCEPTED,M UT THAT NO REPLY HAD YET BEEN RECEIVED CONCERNING A SPECIFIC DATE. (HE HAD EARLIER TOLD US THAT ARAFAT WAS TO ARRIVE IN MOSCOW IN LATE NOVEMBER.) CONFIDENTIAL

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IN PYRLIN'S VIEW, THE ONGOING CRISIS IN LEBANON WAS PERHAPS TAKING UP ALL OF ARAFAT'S TIME, AND IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE NOW TO PREDICT WHEN ARAFAT COULD MAKE THE TRIP. THE SOVIET VIEW, PYRLIN SAID, IS THAT IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE THE CONCEPT OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS. WHEN IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT THIS COULD NOT EASILY TAKE PLACE UNTIL PLO ACKNOWLEDGES ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST, PYRLIN ALLOWED THAT PRESSURE FROM SEVERAL FACTIONS WITHIN THE PLO MAKE IT "VERY DIFFICULT" FOR ITS LEADERSHIP TO RECOGNIZE THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL.

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6798

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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5. WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE RECENT SOVIET STATEMENT MARKS ANY CHANGE IN MOSCOW'S ASSESSMENT OF THE POSSIBILITY OR UTILITY OF FUTURE PARTIAL SETTLEMENTS, PYRLIN ASSERTED THAT THE USSR ADHERES TO ITS PREVIOUSLY STATED POSITION THAT "PARTIAL MEASURES" WHICH MIGHT BE REACHED WITHIN THE GENEVA FRAMEWORK WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE SOVIET UNION. IN THIS REGARD, HE SAID THAT A GOLAN AGREEMENT NEGOTIATED UNDER THE EAGIS OF A GENEVA CONFERENCE COULD CONCEIVABLY MEET THESE CRITERIA. HE EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT ALL
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INTERESTED PARTIES, INCLUDING PLO, MUST AGREE TO ANY SUCH SETTLEMENT AND ADDED THAT THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT, IN ANY CASE, WAS NOT INTERESTED IN SUCH AN AGREEMENT AT THIS STAGE.

6. ACCORDING TO PYRLIN, SYRIA, REFLECTING THE "ARAB MENTAL PROCESS" WHICH DEMANDS PUTTING DECISIONS OFF TILL THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT, WOULD PROBABLY WAIT UNTIL THE ELEVENTH HOUR BEFORE MAKING A DECISION ON RENEWAL OF THE UNDOF MANDATE. HE EXPECTED A MINI-CRISIS IN THIS CONNECTION, BUT HE ALSO SEEMED TO EXPECT THE RENEWAL TO COME EVENTUALLY. ASAD, PYRLIN SAID, HAS NOT YET DISCUSSED THIS MATTER WITH THE SOVIETS.

7. USSR-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. PYRLIN CHARACTERIZED MOSCOW'S RELATIONS WITH CAIRO AS "ALMOST NORMAL." HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN LITTLE REACTION FROM THE EGYPTIAN PRESS TO THE RECENT PRAVDA ARTICLE ABOUT PRESIDENT SADAT (REFTEL), BUT THAT "ALL THE WESTERN NEWSMEN" SAW SOME CONNECTION BETWEEN THE PUBLICATION OF THE ARTICLE AND SADAT'S THEN IMPENDING DEPARTURE FOR THE US. SUCH TIMING, ACCORDING TO PYRLIN, WAS "PURE COINCIDENCE." PRODDED BY OBVIOUS SKEPTICISM AT HIS ANODYNE STATEMENTS REGARDING SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS, PYRLIN ADMITTED CONSIDERABLE SOVIET ANNOYANCE AT VARIOUS REMARKS BY EGYPTIANS CASTIGATING THE SOVIETS, AND IN THIS REGARD SINGLED OUT RECENT SPEECH BY EGYPTIAN VICE PRESIDENT AS PARTICULARLY OFFENSIVE. PYRLIN CLAIMED THAT MOSCOW IS PREPARED TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC MATTERS WITH CAIRO, INCLUDING PROBLEM OF DEBT-RESCHEDULING AND THAT A SOVIET DELEGATION "AUTHORIZED TO NEGOTIATE" IS READY TO DEPART FOR EGYPT, BUT THAT "BUDGET PROBLEMS" IN CAIRO ARE PREVENTING THE START OF NEGOTIATIONS.

8. USSR-IRAQ RELATIONS. PYRLIN STATED THAT THE RECENT VISIT BY AN IRAQI DELEGATION HEADED BY THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION HAD LED TO "FRUITFUL" TALKS, ESPECIALLY IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE. PYRLIN OFFERED THE OBSERVATION, HOWEVER, THAT BAGHDAD'S VIEW OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE -- "THE CENTRAL CRISIS"--WAS NOT HELPFUL IN THAT IRAQ BELIEVED THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM LIES IN THE "COMPLETE ELIMINATION OF ISRAEL." PYRLIN AGREED THAT THIS POSITION DOES NOT LEAVE MUCH ROOM FOR NEGOTIATION.

9. UPCOMING VISITS. IN ADDITION TO THE COMMENTS ON ARAFAT, PYRLIN MENTIONED THAT KING HUSSEIN HAS AGREED TO VISIT MOSCOW NEXT YEAR, CONFIDENTIAL

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PROBABLY IN JUNE, AND THAT THE KUWAIT FOREIGN MINISTER IS COMING SOON, FOLLOWED BY A VISIT BY "A DELEGATION FROM SOUTH YEMEN." WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT BY LIBYAN MFA UNDER-SECRETARY DURDAH, PYRLIN REPLIED THAT "FORTUNATELY, LIBYA IS NOT WITHIN MY DIVISION." TO FURTHER PROBING RE POSSIBLE DISCUSSIONS OF ARMS SALES TO LIBYA, PYRLIN RESPONDED THAT HE "DOUBTED" THIS

WAS BEING DISCUSSED, BECAUSE DURDAH WAS "STRICTLY POLITICAL"
AND DID NOT HAVE THE EXPERTISE TO NEGOTIATE MILITARY MATTERS.

10. COMMENT: WHILE WE DO NOT ACCPET PYRLIN AT FACE VALUE, HIS
REMARK THAT SOVIETS WERE INFLUENCED BY EGYPTIAN PRONOUNCEMENTS IN
MAKING NOVEMBER 9 STATEMENT ARE PROBABLY ACCURATE. WITH SITUATION
AT IMPASSE, MOSCOW PROBABLY FELT IT HAD LITTLE TO LOSE BY
ISSUING SUCH STATEMENT AND THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL VEHICLE TO
EXPRESS ONCE AGAIN SOVIET SOLIDARITY WITH ARAB CAUSE AND TO PUT
PRESSURE ON SADAT TO ACKNOWLEDGE SOVIET "CONSTRUCTIVE" POSITION
ON THIS AND OTHER MIDDLE EAST QUESTIONS. IN ANY CASE, PYRLIN
LEFT THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT MOSCOW ATTACHED NO URGENCY TO ITS
PROPOSAL ON THE MEPC, AND THAT THE DEMARCHE WAS STRICTLY A
PROPAGANDA MOVE. PYRLIN'S BLAND COMMENTS ON MOSCOW' S RELATIONS
WITH CAIRO ARE OBVIOUS WISHFUL THINKING AND CONTRAST SHARPLY WITH
THOSE HEARD FROM EGYPTIAN DIPLOMATS HERE WHO CHARACTERIZE
THEIR BILATERAL RELATIONS AS ANYWHERE FROM "COOL " TO FROZEN"

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